19: Merker FL12 Masai FL12

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[For mythological accounts of the origin of:

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[147 cont.]

External Ailments

759 [232] Surgery is the domain of special surgeons (el. [illegible], al [illegible]) who extend their practice both to human beings and to cattle, goats, sheep, and donkeys. The calling as a rule is handed down from father to son. One cannot speak of a special caste here, however, since the surgeons occupy no special social position -- either in a good or a bad sense. Only the son of an al [illegible] who learns how to practice the art is al [illegible], and, to be sure, only as long as he practices it. If, by way of exception, someone whose father is not a surgeon learns the art, he thereby becomes a surgeon. The surgeon thus practices a open calling.

As payment for help rendered, the al [illegible] receives, according to the difficulty of the case or the amount of work done by him, a head of livestock, from a head of cattle down to a young goat or a lamb. One should also mention the remarkable arrangement that he can make a claim regarding the payment only if his treatment has had the desired result, and the patient [233] need not pay before the resulting complete cure. An established custom determines what falls in the department of the surgeon. The al [illegible] stays within these prescribed limits under all circumstances. If this is not conducive to progress, it has the result, on the other hand, that every [illegible], when necessary, entrusts himself immediately to the surgeon without hesitation. He knows that the latter will not undertake an operation on him which he cannot safely perform, but rather that whatever he does, he has often seen and has done with an older colleague or alone. No narcotic agents are available to the surgeon,
[462] but his patients have [illegible] even very "strong nerves," even an enviable mental sturdiness.

758 The juice of al gilsoti ([illegible] [illegible]), chewed out and spat into the wound, and the charcoal powder of al [illegible] bark ([illegible] [illegible] [illegible]) are used as astringent remedies.

Arteries have ligatures applied, if necessary, and, to be sure, by means of a leather strap placed around the limb, which is tightened by a short stick. The cut ends of the artery are then sewed together as quickly as possible with awl and tendon cord, after they

/[illegible] cont./

732 See wooden page 33–34 contrivance lang. by means of which the
239 artificial leg is splinted to the leg by laced leather straps.

Midwifery and Women's Ailments

759 Midwifery is in the hands of older women, who, as [illegible] (sing. [illegible]), professionally practice the calling of [illegible] and have at their command a surprisingly accurate anatomical knowledge of the body parts in question. It seems that only in
843 exceptional cases are they not called upon at a birth. At the beginning of the last month of pregnancy the midwife examines the pregnant woman several times, in order to determine by palpation of the abdomen the position of the child. The head position is regarded as the most favorable for the birth then. If the woman doing the examining finds another one, she attempts to change it to the desired one by means of a massage.

844 As soon as the first labor pains begin, the midwife, who lives either in the same [illegible] or in one nearby, is called in. She finds the woman in labor, who, incidentally, is not regarded as unclean, on the bed in her hut in a squatting, sitting, or lying position. With a normal birth the assisting woman remains in attendance without performing any kind of superstitious or irrelevant manipulations. On the other hand, if it proves necessary to bring about an intensifying of the labor-pain activity, the midwife, with the help of a few women, first leads the woman in labor around for a few steps and, if the desired result is not obtained in this way, further help is given by means of a light massage. Only if these remedies prove insufficiently effective does one attempt the last one: The woman giving birth is [illegible] slowly lifted by her feet by several women until her body hangs vertically and the crown of her head touches the ground, whereupon the midwife massages her abdomen in the direction of the navel.

The use of internal medicine to promote labor-pain activity is rare: a mixture consisting of liquid sheep fat and a decoction of [illegible] root (Carthamus [illegible] [illegible]) is regarded as effective.

The midwives questioned regard the enlarging of openings through insertion of the hand, in analogy to the birth assistance given livestock.